MUSEUM NEWS

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

WINTER 1965

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
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Museum News

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(Cover)
Covered Sweetmeat
or butter dish.
New England area,
before 1830.
Pressed clear lead glass.
Height 4 3/4 inches
with cover.

The Duckworth Gift of Glass

The glass collections of The Toledo Museum of Art are renowned for their quality and extensiveness. In certain areas, however, the collections present an incomplete picture of the glassmaking art. One of these lacunae occured in the American collection where pressed glass and particularly lacy objects and other types produced in the first half of the nineteenth century were lacking. Through the generous gifts of Mrs. Harold G. Duckworth, the Museum collection has now received another link in its chain, permitting a more complete exhibition of early American glass.

Mrs. Duckworth lent a portion of her cup plate collection in 1963 to the Museum's exhibition, *The New England Glass Company, 1818-1888.* As a guest at the opening of the exhibition, Mrs. Duckworth proposed a gift from the collection formed by her late husband and herself, and this booklet illustrates a portion of the glittering result of her proposal. The richness of the rare, early pressed, and lacy examples now in the collection is due to Mrs. Duckworth's generosity.

We especially appreciate the loan of forty-five objects shown in January-March 1966 at the occasion of an exhibition celebrating the Duckworth gift. These choice objects, combined with those given in 1964-1966, present a vivid array of the finest examples of American pressed glass produced during the growing years of the Republic.

Otto Wittmann, Director

Early American Pressed Glass

Pressing as a technique for the manufacture of glass was an American contribution to the art of glassmaking. Its earliest applications are lost in antiquity, but its adoption and furtherance in America coincided with the giant strides of the industrial revolution in the first decades of the 19th century. The glass in the Duckworth collection reflects the vigor of the early American industry, the invention of its pioneer craftsmen, the ingenuous sensitivity of its artists.

Only mass production met the needs of the expanding market in America. Blown or molded glass required much hand-working and consumed time. Pressed glass needed little or no hand-working, for the pressing machine did all the work. It was quick, for the pressing machine worked faster than a glassblower. It was precise, for its pattern was already determined and then processed by the metal mold. Pressing was the beginning of true automation in the glass industry.

Early pressed objects were of lead glass, the more expensive and brilliant metal. Simplified, the pressing process involved a blob of molten glass, gathered on a pontil rod, sheared off into an open mold, and forced into the grooves and interstices of the mold by a plunger rammed down into the open top of the mold. The designer who made the brass or iron mold determined the pattern and shape of the piece. The operator of the machine provided only muscle

power. Pressed objects usually received no hand-finishing, so rough edges on plates and bowls often occur. The refraction of light through the pattern in pressed objects determines the brilliance and prismatic effect so desirable in fine glass. Small dots in the mold gave a stippled appearance to lacy pieces, and stippling is a criterion for what is termed lacy glass. In general, all lacy glass was made within two or three decades, about 1825-1850.

The decoration of pressed glass is derived from the pattern in the mold. It is unusual to find added decoration in the form of enamelling, gilding, cutting, etching, or engraving, but these methods were used on occasional pieces. The patterns for early pressed glass are geometrical and seldom representational. Generally, the design covers the outside surface of the object, leaving little area untouched. The interior of pressed pieces remains smooth. Contemporary cut glass and pottery may have suggested design sources for the mold makers, whose machine shops provided molds for their parent factory and occasionally for neighboring ones. Thus, some factories issued identically patterned glass because of the single source of molds.

Although patent records are lost for the first years of the 1800s, the pressing machine was developed, it is known, in the 1820s. Perhaps the earliest American patent for pressed glass was one for furniture knobs recorded by Bakewell and Company, Pittsburgh, on September 9, 1825. The second one was awarded to Enoch Robinson and Henry Whitney of the New England Glass Company, again for knobs, on November 4, 1826. Other patents were soon granted to other glass houses. As most of these were concentrated along the eastern seaboard of America, most pressed glass emanated from these factories, and particularly from the New England region.

For years, when glass scholarship was very new, all early pressed glass was labeled "Sandwich," a designation for the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company, Sandwich, Massachusetts. It probably was the largest single producer of pressed glass, but not the exclusive maker. Quantities were made by other factories in New England and by those in the Midwest and the central eastern states. A large producer in the New England area besides the Sandwich factory was the New England Glass Company of East Cambridge, Massachusetts. A number of factories were clustered in the Pittsburgh area, and the central state producers ranged from Philadelphia to Brooklyn.

Decanter (64.122)
New England Glass Company
or South Boston Glass Company,
ca. 1820.
Blown clear lead glass,
pressed stopper.
Height 8 3/4 inches with stopper.

The Duckworth Collection

Among collections of lacy, cup plates, and other early American pressed glass, the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Harold G. Duckworth of Springfield, Massachusetts, ranks with the finest ones. The collection was only one result of their collecting tastes. Before Mr. Duckworth's death in 1961, he had formed an impressive and large stamp collection, and, together, they developed a major collection of English pottery, particularly strong in lustre ware, Staffordshire, and Leeds examples. Their collecting interest was first fired by attendance and some purchases at the William W. Nolen sale at Anderson Galleries, New York, October 29, 1923, and days following. Nolen, known affectionately as "Widow Nolen" in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was a tutor, accumulated American decorative arts in great quantity and of fine quality.

Through their contacts as pottery collectors with Richard H. Wood, a Baltimore dealer, they became interested about 1949 in American glass cup plates. These tiny saucers were receptacles for the tea or coffee cup after the cup's liquid had been poured into its matching saucer to cool. The attractiveness of these objects led them to seek other forms of American glass, generally contemporary with the cup plates of the first half of the 19th century. Today, the lacy and early pressed glass from the Duckworth collection is spoken of in superlative terms.

Collecting early pressed glass is more difficult than collecting the late pieces; acquiring objects in colored glass is harder than acquiring clear ones. Mr. and Mrs. Duckworth set a high standard on the condition of their glass, but, also, attempted to collect colored objects rather than the more common examples in clear metal. Thus, the collection does not represent what might be called a *representative* grouping of early pressed American glass, for the great rarities categorize the glass as a unique collection. Mr. and Mrs. Duckworth's acquisitions brought them rather late to the cup plate field, yet their collection is the finest one privately owned today.

Because glassmaking prospered first along the eastern seaboard of America, and two of the notable factories were in the New England area, the collection is especially strong in glass from the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company and the New England Glass Company. Superb pieces from factories west of the Appalachian Mountains are represented, too.

Mr. and Mrs. Duckworth's New England residence placed them close to many American glass dealers. They attended auctions and visited exhibitions. As their collection grew, display room dwindled. Book shelves and closet space were converted to exhibit and store the collection. Storage of such a large glass collection presents special problems besides fragility, such as dust prevention, lighting, and accessibility. For the cup plates, the Duckworths adapted one hundred year old spool cabinets and their many shallow drawers to house the tiny discs, each one placed in a cellophane envelope. Their record-keeping and numbering system indicates the special care and attention given to the glass.

A private collection is formed for the pleasure it gives its owners in forming, studying, and enjoying it. Museums share the pleasures of these collections with the public through exhibitions. To receive a private collection as a gift evidences the donor's faith in the Museum's role as a public collection able to exhibit to vast numbers the aesthetic merits of such an important collection as that formed by Mr. and Mrs. Harold G. Duckworth.

Millard F. Rogers, Jr.

Pair of vases (64.76A-B).
Perhaps Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1840-1850.
Pressed sapphire blue lead glass.
Height 11 1/4 and 11 3/8 inches.

Pair of decanters (65.7A-B).
New England or Pittsburgh areas,
ca. 1830-1840.
Blown in mold opaque yellow
lead glass.
Height 10 1/4 inches.

Spillholder (65.127).
Boston and Sandwich Glass Company
or McKee Brothers Glass Company,
Pittsburgh, ca. 1840-1850.
Pressed opalescent lead glass.
Height 4 5/8 inches.

Covered bowl (65.116).
Perhaps Bakewell, Pears and Company,
Pittsburgh, ca. 1850-1860.
Pressed opaque white lead glass.
Height 7 3/4 with cover.

Compote (65.132).
Boston and Sandwich Glass Company
or a Wheeling, West Virginia, factory,
ca. 1830-1840.
Pressed clear lead glass.
Height 4 1/2 inches.

Pitcher (65.107).
Bakewell, Pears and Company, Pittsburgh,
or Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1850-1860.
Pressed dark violet glass.
Height 4 7/8 inches.

Lamp (64.74).
New England area,
ca. 1840.
Blown, pressed, and cut
clear lead glass.
Height 11 7/8 inches with shade.

Pair of lamps (65.126A-B).
Probably Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1840.
Pressed and blown molded
clear lead glass.
Height 11 1/2 inches.

Dish (65.119).
Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
before 1840.
Pressed clear lead glass.
Diameter 9 1/2 inches.

Vegetable dish (65.154).
Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1825-1850.
Length 9 1/2 inches.

Lamp (64.72B).
New England area,
ca. 1835.
Blown, pressed, and cut
clear lead glass.
Height 9 3/8 inches
(without fixtures).
One of a pair,
slightly different cut designs.

Goblet (65.24).
New England area,
perhaps Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1840-1860.
Pressed opalescent lead glass.
Height 6 inches.

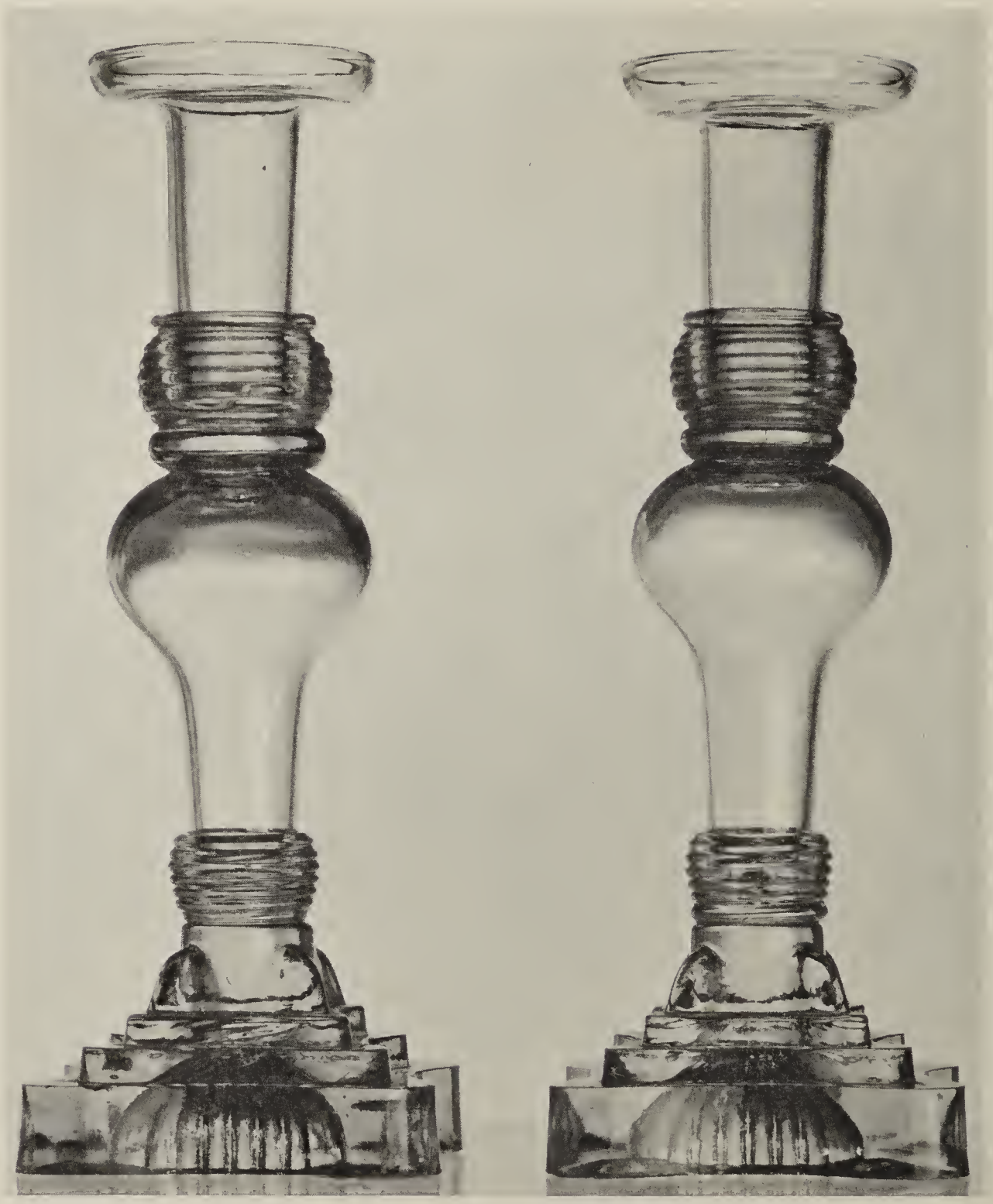
Spoonholder (65.125).
Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1860-1870.
Pressed jade green lead glass
with gilded decoration.
Height 5 3/4 inches.

Claret goblet (65.139).
Perhaps Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1840-1850.
Pressed opalescent lead glass.
Height 5 1/2 inches.

Compote (65.147).
Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1825-1850.
Pressed electric blue lead glass.
Height 5 1/4 inches;
diameter 7 inches.

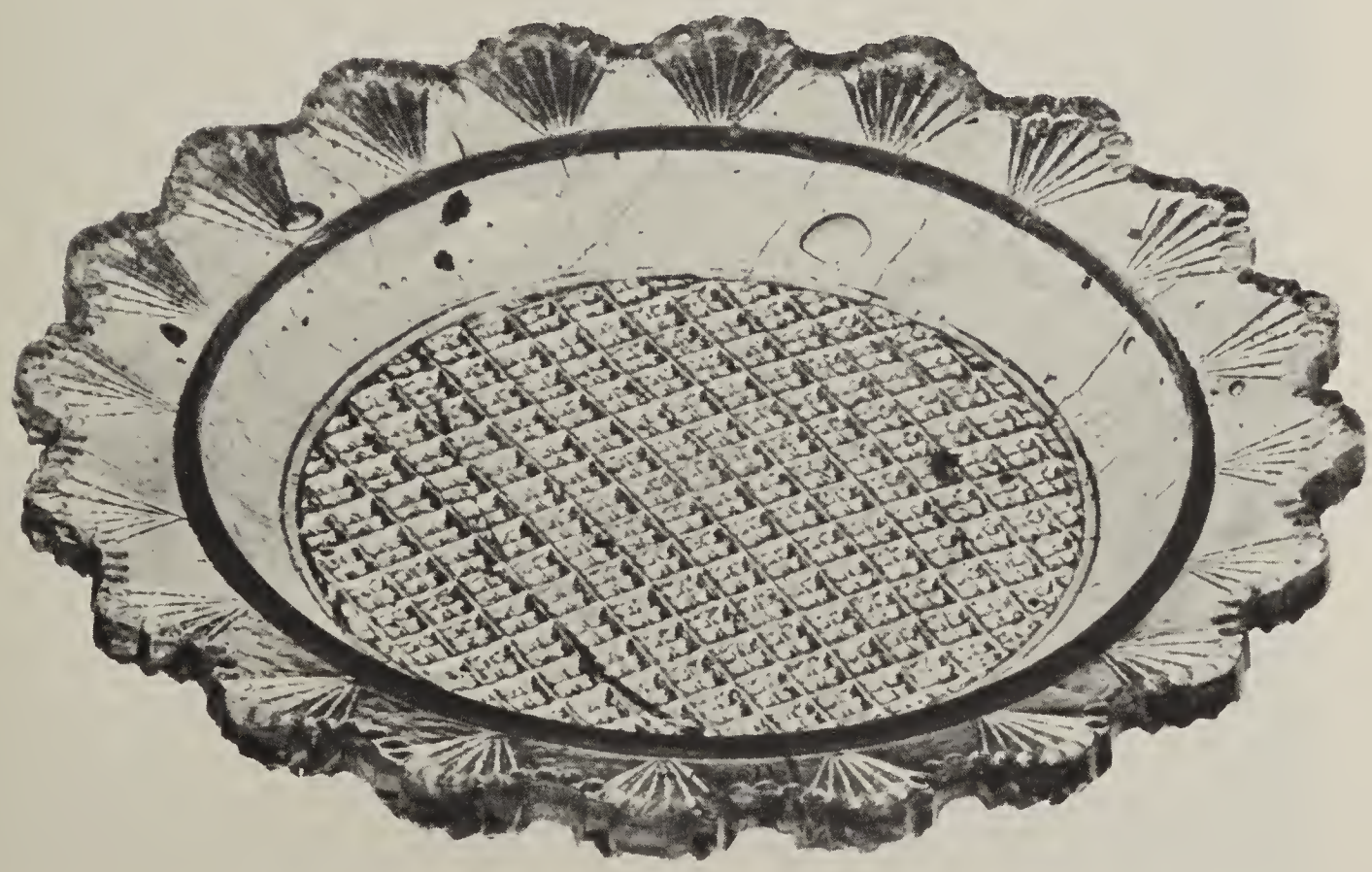
Spillholder (65.23).
New England area,
probably Boston and Sandwich Glass
Company, ca. 1840-1860.
Pressed yellow lead glass.
Height 4 1/2 inches.

Pair of candlesticks (64.63A-B).
New England area,
perhaps Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1830-1840.
Blown and pressed clear lead glass.
Height 10 3/8 inches.



Bowl (64.81).
Perhaps Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1835.
Pressed clear lead glass.
Length 12 inches.

Plate (64.94).
Probably New England Glass Company,
perhaps Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1825-1850.
Pressed light green lead glass.
Diameter 5 7/8 inches.



Pitcher (65.68).
Probably New England Glass Company,
ca. 1865-1870.
Pressed clear lead glass.
Height 5 1/8 inches. California pattern.

Sugar bowl and cover (65.70A-B).
Probably New England Glass Company,
ca. 1865-1870.
Pressed clear lead glass.
Height 6 inches. California pattern.

Presentation goblet (65.39).
New England area,
New England Glass Company or
Boston and Sandwich Glass Company,
ca. 1860-1870.
Blown, cut, and engraved clear
lead glass. Height 6 7/8 inches.

Lamp (65.20).
New England area,
perhaps New England Glass Company,
ca. 1830-1840.
Blown, pressed, and cut clear
lead glass.
Height 11 7/8 inches
(with fixture).

Salt cellar (65.44).
New England Glass Company,
ca. 1825.
Blown in mold, clear glass.
Length 3 7/8 inches,
height 3 1/8 inches.

Pair of lamps (64.64A-B).
Midwestern area,
perhaps Pittsburgh,
ca. 1840-1850.
Blown and pressed clear lead glass.
Height 8 1/2 inches
(without fixture).

Decanter (65.5).
New England or Pittsburgh area,
ca. 1830-1840.
Blown in mold dark blue
lead glass.
Height 10 1/8 inches.

Compote (64.67).
Pittsburgh area,
ca. 1840-1850.
Blown and cut clear lead glass.
Height 7 inches;
diameter 9 1/2 inches.

Flask (64.88).
Perhaps Midwestern area (Ohio?),
ca. 1830-1840.
Blown molded deep sapphire
blue glass.
Height 8 5/8 inches.

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

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